Jane Mosley (Dau
a present from
Mr Thomson
Leith

THE POWER OF DIVINE TEACHING EXEMPLIFIED.

1609/2635.

Jane Moore Davidson
1815

THE

POWER

OF

DIVINE TEACHING

EXEMPLIFIED,

IN THE

LIFE AND THOUGHTS

OF

J. W.

WHO FINISHED A SHORT CHRISTIAN COURSE,
AT THE AGE OF EIGHT.

The child ſhall die an hundred years old. ISAIAH.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY J. RITCHIE,
SOLD FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

1796.

TOWER

OF

DIVINE TEACHING

EXPLAINED

IN THE

LIFE AND WORKS

OF

J. W.

WITH PREFIXED A SHORT CHRISTIAN COMMENT,

AS AND FOR OUR TIME.

PRINTED BY J. RITSEMA,

FOR THE AUTHOR'S BENEFIT OF THE SCHOOL.

1876.

LETTER

To the Rev. Mr ROBERT WALKER of the High Church, Edinburgh.

January 1776.

WHEN you desire to have some regular and written account of the short life of my dear departed child, there is no person so well entitled to command me, or whose command can be so acceptable. You assisted him much with your instructions, and had frequent opportunities of observing his progress both in the knowledge and experience of divine truths, till, through the faith and hope of the gospel, he at length attained that full assurance of enjoying God, which enabled him to finish his course with joy.

I wish to put my narrative in few words. If I am to do so, I must restrain my feelings. I shall therefore try to write of my boy as any other person would, and introduce myself as seldom as possible.

You know the child was of a quick lively disposition, and a keen warm temper, yet was sensible and modest, affectionate, and easily corrected. His father brought him early under subjection, and he seldom was violent after three years of age. Indeed, obedience to his parents was one of the first and most lasting impressions made on his young conscience by the power of religion against a naturally strong spirit.

He ſoon diſcovered a fondneſs for knowledge, and a turn for retaining what he was taught. When not engaged in learning, he loved play as much as other children.

About the age of three, he was brought to family-worſhip, and began to follow in ſinging, if the line was read out, and to pick up expreſſions for his morning and evening prayers. He had at this early period impreſſions of God's power, immenſity, and eternity, ſaying ſometimes, he could not think of theſe, they were ſo great. He had alſo ſome convictions of ſin, was awake to its evil nature, and would be grieved when he had been poſitive or croſs.

At four years of age, he was taken with the hooping-cough, and had the meaſles uncommonly ſevere at the ſame time. The former continued a whole year, at the end of which he got ſo far better as to go to ſchool. There he made great proficiency; and, as he advanced himſelf, took much pleaſure in little attempts to teach other children as he could. But the diſeaſes I have mentioned, with an accident, (a fall from the hands of a perſon who ventured to give him the indulgence of a few minutes on horſeback), broke his conſtitution. He lived three years under complicated violent diſtreſs.

As judgment ripened, he became more promiſing. He quickly learned to read well, and acquired a juſtneſs in repeating the Pſalms, Hymns, and portions of Scripture, which he had been fond of committing to memory. Blank verſe particularly ſoon became his taſte, and he uſed to deliver long pieces of Dr Young's Night Thoughts over a chair by way of ſermons, adding ſinging and prayer. It was when he was about ſeven years old, that he firſt began to ſubſtitute ſentiments of his own, helped by printed ſermons, &c. but formed more and more, as he continued, by himſelf from the Scriptures; and thus began an exerciſe, in which he perſevered and delighted to the laſt. Such

were his conſtant employments of a Lord's day when he could not be taken to church. He ſpent that day conſcientiouſly, always in ſome ſerious employment; a good deal in ſpeaking to the other children, who were all younger, and to whom he was as eager to communicate, as he was himſelf inquiſitive to underſtand, what he learned. His thirſt for knowledge ſhewed itſelf in whatever he applied to; in the Scriptures eſpecially, he could paſs nothing without enquiry. The Being and Perfections of God often overwhelmed his thoughts. Here we found it moſt uſeful to lead his mind to Jeſus Chriſt manifeſt in the fleſh, as the expreſs image of God, to his works on earth, his ſufferings and death, and to what he is now doing in heaven; directing his thoughts thus to what could be explained, according to John i. 18. and indeed to what he loved moſt to hear of.

In July 1774, he deſired one day particularly to ſee you. He began with aſking you, how he ſhould love and ſerve the Lord? But the point he wiſhed to hear you on, was the nature of Chriſt's interceſſion. You will probably remember the converſation. He never afterwards forgot what you ſaid on that occaſion.

In November following, he became ſo deſirous to ſee the Lord's ſupper diſpenſed, that he was carried to church, though very weak and bad. He gave great heed, and aſked afterwards thus: "Do they not think of Chriſt at the table?" We told him, yes. "May not children think of him, though they are not there?" O yes. "Then I thought of him, that he loved us, and died for us." Once after this, muſing, he broke out, "The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?" We told him it was a repreſentation. "I know, ſaid he, I mean that; I find it

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is too deep for me, but I think they have fellowship with God."

By and by he became so ill as to be deprived of public means of instruction. This made his proficiency in knowledge and grace more visibly the work of God. His sickness would not even permit him to look at a book for any length of time; he then made another person take it up. He acquired a habit of amassing attention to reading, and from it continued to put together thoughts of his own, so superior to his years, that as soon as he seemed a dying child, they were evidently too valuable to be lost. I repeat the judgment of them you, Sir, expressed, and make no apology that the mind of a parent coincided. It was then I began not only to commit to paper his little sermons as he delivered them, but also to take memorandums, which supply me with the particulars I now send you.

He was fond of the Pilgrim's Progress, and when able delighted in entering into the spiritual meaning of that book. Indeed, to his very last hours, he had it constantly with him, and would often say, Read to me of Tender-conscience. His memory was stored with what he heard in this way; and one of his discourses was drawn from a sermon of Boston, a fortnight after it had been read to him: "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness."

His illness at length became so violent that he could not attend for a time to any thing. This was a double distress, nor shall I soon forget the relief we received when his mind returned again to its usual activity, which it was not long of doing, and when he began to challenge us for not examining him. At this time he endeavoured, in the midst of much pain, to spend a great part of a Sabbath in reading, hearing, and the exercise of the Catechism, which on Lord's day evenings was gone through with the children, including him when able. In those evenings he delighted, and

was

was particularly fond of this employment. On one occaſion, when the ſecond queſtion of the Mother's Catechiſm, "Who redeems you?" introduced the character and offices of Chriſt, he ſaid, "He is called a Saviour, becauſe he ſaves us; a Redeemer, becauſe he redeems us from ſin and wrath. He is God and man, and he intercedes for us, and teaches us by his Spirit. I want to live, and know more of him. When I wiſh to underſtand any thing, I pray to him, and he teaches me. I find it better to be taught of God than man. 'Tis long time and ſtudying to be taught of man; but He teaches at once, and makes us underſtand." At another time, he ſaid, "I love prayer, for it comforts me." We aſked, how? "O, ſaid he, when I am diſtreſſed with fears of hell, or when Satan tempts me, or puts ill thoughts in my mind, I reſiſt him, and he goes away; and when I pray, or hear prayer, I am comforted with the hopes of heaven. I find it better than I can expreſs it." Sin gave him much concern, both in himſelf and other children. He was wont to cry for it, and ſaid once, he often did ſo in his cloſet.

As his diſeaſe, though early reckoned mortal by ſome of the medical gentlemen who ſaw him, was very fluctuating, he was, during the laſt twelve months of his life, often as ill and low as at the time I have mentioned, and again a little better. On each favourable turn, his ſtrong natural ſpirits immediately revived, and his deſire, which was conſtantly very great, for public worſhip, would then reſume all its force, ſo that he would often cry exceedingly when we could not venture to take him. It was uſually thought beſt for him to ſpend great part of the year a little way out of town, and the laſt time he was at church was before his removal laſt ſpring. When he began to find that this favourite point muſt be given up, he betook himſelf the more to his Bible. "I like it better, he would ſay, than

other

other books, for I underſtand it beſt. I do not like any book that puts it out of my head." Not that he was always ſerious. He had the keeneſt reliſh for his leſſons and other common reading; he ſtill retained a ſpirit for play; had always exceeded in it above his ſtrength; and when no longer able to romp, he taught himſelf to write, (for his ſtate of health did not admit of the uſual aſſiſtance), and to draw, for which he had a natural turn; in theſe attempts he continued to the laſt. While in the country, he took much pleaſure in writing letters to his father, ſix, eight, or ten ſhort lines, as he was able. They are chiefly enquiries after the meaning of ſcripture paſſages, and will ever be a ſweet and valuable memorial to us of his forwardneſs at once in outward and ſpiritual things.

He continued to advance daily, and was eager to deliver his little ſtudies, confining them however entirely to the family. He would on no account ſpeak before ſtrangers; and this was through a ſenſibility which was more than baſhfulneſs. If I were not writing to you, I durſt hardly perhaps ſay I am here not writing as a mother: But you know it was ſo; and kindly ſuited to it, when you wiſhed to hear him, was the method you took to urge him. Not endeavouring to gain on him as a child, but appealing to the affection between you, you touched his gratitude for your inſtructions, which grew with his life. It was here oppoſed by his veneration for you. But the deſire of his father, for whom he had the greateſt love and deference, prevailed, when, in September laſt, a very ſhort time before his death, he ſpoke before Mrs Walker and you on the firſt part, you will remember, of Mat. v. You ſaw the diffidence and weakneſs of frame, under which he was hardly able to bear up; and yet, with what life and energy he continued, (taking a little water when faint), to a length of time that almoſt equally pained as gratified us.

One

One day after this he ſaid, "I could not bear my diſtreſs if Chriſt did not bear it for me." How do you know Chriſt bears it? we aſked. "I have read it, anſwered he; and I believe it, I do believe it." Iſa. lxiii. 9. was mentioned to him, "In all their afflictions he was afflicted." This ſcripture gave him much pleaſure.

About this period he ſpoke what is written from John ix. finging, as ſuited to the exerciſes of his mind at the time, Pſal. cxix. 65. through the full part, to the end of v. 73. and then Pſal. cxviii. from v. 17. to the end of v. 23. The other diſcourſes were earlier. He had ſtudied Heb. x. 19. and downwards, "Having boldneſs to enter into the holieſt," &c. and part of 1 Cor. xv. on the reſurrection; but his illneſs increaſing more and more, he became ſilent about a fortnight, and thoſe thoughts he never was able to deliver. Different times he ſaid, "I'm ſtill plagued with my lecture, yet not plagued neither, for 'tis very pleaſant." When aſked, what lecture? he would anſwer, "About the reſurrection, but I can't ſpeak." And from time to time, being obſerved to be much engaged in thought, if queſtioned, he always ſaid, "You know it already."

Being taken with a fit like a forerunner of diſſolution, (which indeed was now haſtening), and reviving again, he prayed, "O make us holy in all manner of converſation. Take us to heaven, where there will be fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures at thy right-hand for ever." Then, looking up, ſaid, "I'm half in heaven already. But I would like to live a little longer." This deſire had always prevailed. It ſometimes appeared in his diſcourſes. The caſe ſuppoſed at the end of that on Prov. xiv. was his own. "I would like to live longer, he would ſay, and teach the reſt of the children, and enjoy them longer, and know more of God and my own heart; but perhaps we will know more of God in heaven, and our friends will come there

to

to us if they are religious." He would check himſelf thus when expreſſing his wiſh to recover; but it continued ſo ſtrong as to amount long to a full perſuaſion that he ſhould: and we did not interfere much, but left it to the Lord, who was teaching him, to turn his mind. This in due time was fully accompliſhed. The change, when he ſaw and realized death, was ſevere; but it was a conflict followed by victory indeed. At preſent both his fears and his confidence were yet to come, ſo that his deſire to live ſeemed in a great degree his ſtrong affection to us; and after he paſſed his trying hours, and had eternity full in happy proſpect, his views of continued love to us, and connection with us, were unabated in his mind. "I know I ſhall go to heaven, ſaid he then; my ſoul ſhall go juſt now, my body ſhall go after; yet I think I ſhall know what you are all doing, and ſhall ſpeak to you. I think ſomehow I ſhall preach again to my own congregation."—The ſuppoſable connection between the preſent and ſeparate ſtates, is perhaps a ſubject beyond the reach of the ideas and language equally of the oldeſt and youngeſt ſojourner on earth. The thought I give you here was delivered by a child, and I do not alter his words.

Poſſeſſing, with a warm heart, a thinking mind, he could not be inſenſible to the care taken of him. It attracted his gratitude to a degree not expected of children of his age. We were happy indeed in the matter of aſſiſtance. His conſtant attendant had been his maid from his infancy, and watched over him, both from principle and attachment, with the moſt unwearied tenderneſs. "Pray for me, that the Lord may ſpare me to reward you," he would in return ſay to her, when he could ſpeak little elſe. He had warm paſſions, and grace had now turned them to flow in every amiable, endearing, and affectionate channel.

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The period I mentioned drew on. One evening, on being moved, he almoſt fainted. Recovering, he cried out, "O he is a gracious God, he is a gracious God! O pray for me, that the Lord may either make me as well as I was before my fall, or if that be not his will, that he may pardon my ſins, and let me know where I am going. O pray that my little ſins and my great ſins may be pardoned. You know them; you know the lie I once told, denying I had ſwallowed a bead. Pray that he may make me eaſy, and take me to himſelf," While one of us was attempting to ſpeak, he broke out bitterly, "O my ſins, my ſins! I am crying for my ſins. O Jeſus Chriſt, pardon my ſins, all my ſins, and pardon them now, now, now!" Crying thus, he fell ſoft and eaſy, and ever afterwards continued ſo. A miniſter and he had had a little converſation about death, which had affected him; but the whole work was of God. He continued to love prayer, though not able ſometimes to attend to it, ſaying often, "Save me, ſave me! I am tired praying; is nobody praying for me?" And, as before, he deſired a clergyman, "Pray if it be the Lord's will to recover me; if not, that I may go to heaven."

The twenty-third pſalm then became his ſupport. He deſired to underſtand it, and ſent one day, you will remember, for you, to aſk, why Chriſt was called a Shepherd, and why in other places David's ſon and David's Lord, and equal with the Father, though he ſays, "the Father is greater than I." The ſufferings of Jeſus coming to be mentioned, as ſet forth in Pſal. xxii. "My God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" he expreſſed further perplexity at theſe words, ſaying, "How did the Father forſake him? He was God; how could God forſake himſelf?" And

this introducing the ſubject of the Trinity, you told him theſe were matters of faith rather than reaſoning; but his keen mind continued, after you left him, enquiring of one perſon after another, when, on itſelf, it pleaſed God this view opened, that the human nature of Chriſt addreſſed in that paſſage the divine nature. He was told he might with ſafety keep the thought. He continued that evening to converſe to the ſame purpoſe, explaining to a child what he had heard and ſaid through the day, of Chriſt's ſufferings, divine nature, power, death and glory; then at night ſpoke thus: "Chriſt is the good ſhepherd; he leads his ſheep in paths they know not; they would ſoon run aſtray; perhaps they would run to the market, and the butcher would kill them." Who is the butcher? we aſked. "O the devil, who hates them, and would deſtroy them; Chriſt leads them in green paſtures." What are theſe? "O his word, and ordinances, and his Spirit. I want to lecture on that; I think I ſhall be able in two days; I think the Lord will give me ſtrength to do it." To turn his mind from this, he was told of the difficulty of his being a miniſter, particularly from his want of health. "O, ſaid he, I would not mind that. If it is the Lord's will, I would like to live and preach theſe things; yet I'm juſt as well pleaſed to die when young, for I know now I ſhall go to heaven." How know you that now? ſaid I. "Becauſe my ſins are forgiven. But if I am dying now, I ſhould like to know it ſome time before, that I may prepare for death." What would you do? "O I would make you write down all that is on my heart. I would have you ſend copies to my companions," naming ſome about whom he was much concerned, and very anxious. What more then would you do, my dear? "I would give good advices

vices to my brother and ſiſters." And what more? Looking eagerly at me, "O mamma, if I might live to grow up, I would ſpeak to you, and would wiſh you to live, to hear all I have to ſay." I was very deſirous he ſhould proceed. There was ſomething on his mind, but it ſeemed too big for him; and though I often tried afterwards, I never could obtain it. He was only able now to add, "But you muſt not grieve for me if I die."

Next day he ſaid, "All my fears are now gone, and all my temptations. I have no more evil thoughts nor dreams." What were your fears? we aſked. "For hell." What your evil thoughts? "Thoughts that the devil put into my mind to take God's name in vain, as I have heard other boys. O I think the devil is a wicked and a proud ſpirit; he would have me to worſhip him; I hate him for his pride. Why is he called *the devil?*" Juſt for his pride and wickedneſs, anſwered we; and put him in mind that the ſame was his Lord's temptation. "O, ſaid he, his impudence offered Chriſt his own world that he had made, to worſhip him." He would wiſh to make you very miſerable. "O but I am not going to be miſerable for him; I will not mind him. O I am happy, happy. I thank my God that he has afflicted me, and made me like David, who ſays, Before I was afflicted I went aſtray. I have nothing to boaſt of, or to be proud of. I would have been wicked, if the Lord had let me, taking his name in vain like others; but now I'm not tempted. I pray always to God: he keeps me. I am glad I have been ſick when young. I am not weary of it. I'm very happy." We called two of the children that were at home. He addreſſed them thus: "Pray often to God. You do not pray often enough. What is praying twice a day? Pray to him to bleſs you, and to keep

you

you from hell: it is a miſerable place: to take you to heaven, and make you happy. Pray to be kept from lying. Seek an intereſt in Chriſt, and to be waſhed in his blood. Look unto me, ſays Chriſt, and be ye ſaved, all ye ends of the earth. I have looked to him, and I am ſaved. I ſhall go to heaven." Theſe ſweet emphatic words were uttered, not with tranſport, but with placid yet impreſſive ſerenity. He added, "Give good advices to the reſt, and if you ſhould have any more brothers or ſiſters." Then looking earneſtly at a child four years old, "O be not a liar: liars are ſhut out from God. God's people are children that will not lie. Seek him, and he will be found of you. Accept of him. If you do not, he will turn away from you, and leave you. I would not like to ſee any of you in hell. I think one of us may be in heaven, and ſee another in hell." We aſked how he thought ſo? "Becauſe, ſaid he, I read that the rich man and Lazarus ſaw one another." He deſired his advices might be written, and ſhewn his father, who had not been in the room. Said I, be not vain. "No, he replied, I am not vain; but I may tell my papa all that is in mind."

He aſked often for you to underſtand better what green paſtures were. Your telling him that every ſickneſs was made a green paſture to God's people had been of uſe to him. His deſire to get up and ſpeak on that paſſage and the reſt of his favourite 23d pſalm increaſed to ardour; and his ſpirits were at this time ſo ſtrong and lively, that he prayed for every thing, not diſcouraged by heavy ſick fits and faintings. Once, however, when he found he was not able, after his hopes had riſen very high, the diſappointment overcame him for a moment: he almoſt cried; and then ſaid to his father, he had a doubt if any of the Lord's peo-

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ple had ſuch a deſire to live. A clergyman coming in, the queſtion was put to him, and he pointed at Hezekiah's caſe. "O, ſaid he, I want to be like Hezekiah, if it is the will of God." This wiſh to recover was of a different kind from what we ſaw before: his young heart was ſet on the miniſtry. To the laſt, as every revived hope of riſing to ſpeak returned, the love of life returned with it, but only when thus introduced; it was now long ſince it had not in the leaſt diſcovered itſelf otherwiſe. Indeed I believe this very occaſion was the laſt one; for his ſtrength ſoon after this failed every hour.

With theſe words he lay down again, and deſired us to ſing, which he had not been able to hear for ſome weeks. Pſalm 27th was choſen, from the beginning of the 4th to the concluſion of the 6th verſe. He joined us, raiſing his voice very high, and with more and more aſtoniſhing vigour to the end, adding then, "I am very able."

This was within two days of his death, during which little paſſed that I can relate. For the moſt part in a ſoft ſlumber, he ſeemed done with us and ſublunary things, and was, except to wet his lips, only once rouſed, to liſten to a prayer. Turning reſtleſs, we aſked if he had any pain of body? "Yes." Any fears? "No, no, ſaid he faintly but repeatedly, I have no fears." He wore away gradually; and, with a ſweet countenance breathed out his ſoul in his Redeemer's boſom, Lord's day morning, 5 o'clock, 29th October 1775, aged eight years and ſix weeks.

Spoken

Spoken by J. W. lying on a Settee, Auguſt 1775.

2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, 10.

"We are troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; we are perplexed, but not in deſpair," &c.

When the wicked are troubled with pain, they are likewiſe diſtreſſed, becauſe they fear not God; but when God's people are in pain and ſickneſs, though they be troubled with theſe, they are not diſtreſſed, for they truſt in God, and they think when they die they ſhall be happy, they ſhall go to God. Though they are perplexed, they are not in deſpair; they have God, and therefore they want nothing: and though they are caſt down in their mind with fears often of hell, yet they are not in deſpair or deſtroyed; for they ſhall ſee that they ſhall not go to hell: God will not put them into it. Though they be perſecuted of men, they are not forſaken of God. They bear about with them the dying of the Lord Jeſus; they always think of it, and carry it about with them in their hearts. Their bodies will ſoon die, but the ſoul will never die; and it is it which thinks always of Chriſt: and when it goes to heaven, it will ſee him and praiſe him, and the body will riſe again, and the ſoul will go into it, and it will be no longer a natural body, minding natural things, but a ſpiritual body, ſpeaking forth the praiſes of God. As long as they were in the body they could not ſpeak of ſpiritual things; though they had a diſcerning of them a little, yet they

they could not ſpeak of them, becauſe they had the devil to fight with. They were conſtantly wanting to have an intereſt in Chriſt; the devil oppoſed it, wanting them to himſelf: but God preſerved them, and did not let the devil catch hold of them, as it is ſaid in ſome part of the Bible, He conquers all their enemies. Amen.

2 Chron. xv. 1, 2, 3, 4.

"And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the ſon of Oded. And he went out to meet Aſa, and ſaid unto him, Here ye me, Aſa, and all Judah and Benjamin, the Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye ſeek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forſake him, he will forſake you. Now for a long ſeaſon Iſrael hath been without the true God, and without a teaching prieſt, and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Iſrael, and ſought him, he was found of them."

The Spirit of God is the Holy Ghoſt; he is the third perſon of the Trinity, though there are not three but one Godhead; and he comes ſpiritually into the heart, and he ſanctifies the heart and dwells in it. He does not dwell in the heart till he renews it, and ſanctifies it for himſelf; then he dwells in it.

The Spirit of God ſpake to Aſa and the tribes. They had been for a long time without the knowledge of the true God. They ſerved idols of wood and ſtone; but now he ſpoke to them. So he ſpeaks to us and ſays, The Lord is with you if you ſeek him: if you pray unto him, he will come to you; if you turn from him, he will turn from

from you, and he may not ſoon turn back; but if you ſeek him he will comfort you, and inſtruct you by his word and by his Spirit, as he did to Azariah and to Aza; and he will renew your heart, and make it holy. He will not only give you his gifts, but he will give you himſelf. This is greater, and what would you have more? you ſhall then be happy. The wicked cannot be happy. If you do not ſeek him, his wrath will be on you, and it will ſend you to hell. But Chriſt has died, and ſatisfied the juſtice of God, that you may pray to God, and be happy. O then, will you not ſeek him, and his Spirit, that you may find him. He will be found of you; and then, if you have an intereſt in him, no matter how ſoon you die; you'll go to God. It is much better to die when you are young, for you will then go to him. If you live to grow old, you will ſin; ſo it is better to die.

Chriſt ſpake all theſe things to the Jews; they did not hear, and they would not believe. Now he ſpeaks to the nations and to the Gentiles; and he ſpeaks to you. O then come to him, and receive him. Amen.

MAT. v. 1,—10.

"And ſeeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was ſet, his diſciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth, and taught them, ſaying, Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," &c.

WHEN Chriſt came into the world, he was not known. Two of John's diſciples came to him, and aſked him, Where dwelleſt thou? He ſaid, Come and ſee. They

came and ſaw where he dwelt with the virgin Mary, who had often carried him in her arms; but now he needed not that. When he was a child he followed her; but after he was grown up, and ſhe knew who he was, then ſhe followed him. Theſe two diſciples thought at firſt that he was only a man; but after they heard him, and were acquainted with him, they *ſaw* that he was more than a mere man; that he was the Son of God, the ſecond perſon of the Godhead. They believed in him, and followed him. He had many other followers.

Verſe 1. "And ſeeing the multitudes," or great numbers of people, "he went up into a mountain." It was a private place; but, "when he was ſet, his diſciples came unto him." Now, Chriſt was always ready to ſpeak when people were willing to hear. "And he opened his mouth, and taught them, ſaying,"

Verſe 3. "Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit," that is, thoſe who think themſelves great ſinners, wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked. They are humble, and know that they are nothing in themſelves, and have nothing but what God gives them. Like John, who ſaid to Chriſt, when he came to be baptized of him, I have need to be baptized of thee, for I am a poor miſerable creature, and thou art a great and high One who needeſt nothing; and comeſt thou to be baptized of me? This ſhewed the humbleneſs of John, and it ſhewed the humility of Chriſt; but Chriſt's humility was greateſt: For John was only a mere man, but Chriſt was God as well as man. He was very humble, and loved the humble, and ſaid, "They are bleſſed; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Verſe 4. "Bleſſed are they that mourn," that is for ſin, who mourn in heart that they have ſinned ſo long, and done

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ſo much to make God angry, and think their ſins ſo great that they are afraid God will not forgive them. They mourn alſo for the ſins of other men, and are much caſt down and grieved when they ſee them. They not only mourn for ſin, but they alſo repent and turn from it: for God will not comfort them, who do not in their heart ſay, they will do ſo no more. They that mourn and turn are bleſſed; "for they ſhall be comforted." God comforts them by his word. He lets them ſee that Chriſt died for them on the croſs, and ſatisfied juſtice by his ſufferings; and he comforts them by his promiſes. He comforts them alſo by his Spirit. The Spirit is the third perſon in the Godhead; for there is but one God, yet there are three perſons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, the ſame in ſubſtance, equal in power and glory. And the Holy Ghoſt is called the Comforter, who comforts thoſe that mourn, when they ſit alone meditating upon their ſins, and upon the promiſes of the word, telling them that God loves them, and hath pardoned their ſins, and will be their God.

Verſe 5. "Bleſſed are the meek," who do not mind the high things of this earth, but are minding the higher things of heaven, things that are ſpiritual. They are bleſſed: They ſhall inherit theſe things. God will be their inheritance; and they ſhall have as much of the natural things of this earth as their bodies need; but theſe do not feed their ſouls.

Verſe 6. "Bleſſed are they that do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs." This doth not mean the body; for the body hungers and thirſts for meat and drink, and would die if it did not get them. It is the ſoul that hungers and thirſts after righteouſneſs, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt and holineſs of God. It wants his righteouſneſs and is very

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hungry for it. The ſoul can no more live without this righteouſneſs, than the body can live without meat and drink. They that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs ſeek God and pray unto him, and God is found of thoſe who ſeek him with all their heart. They are bleſſed; "for they ſhall be filled" with righteouſneſs, as the body is with food. They get ſome of it now; and when God takes them to heaven, they ſhall be as full of it as they can hold.

Verſe 7. "Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy." When any one ſees God's people diſtreſſed and perſecuted, it may be, tied to a ſtake to be burned or ſtoned with ſtones, if he be merciful he will ſeek to deliver them, or perhaps offer to pay a price for them to let them go. Now God will be merciful to thoſe who are merciful to his people. The Lord reckons it as done to himſelf; for he ſays, in Matt. xxv. 40. "Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Verſe 8. "Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God." We have all impure hearts, but God's people are ſanctified. "The blood of Jeſus, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot unto God, purges their conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God." They do not allow themſelves in ſin, as others do who love it. Sometimes the devil tempts them, and then ſpots fall on them, as when a ſtain falls on ſomething; but they reſiſt Satan, and God keeps them from falling quite; ſo that they ſerve God with a willing mind, and a heart inclined to do it with joy. They are bleſſed, for they ſhall ſee God. He will take them to himſelf at laſt, and they ſhall ſee him as he is. They were merciful, and had obtained mercy, and ſhall dwell with him for ever. They ſhall

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ſee Chriſt with their bodily eyes. They cannot do that now; but they may ſee him with their mind. Once he was on earth, but now he is in heaven; and the pure in heart ſhall go to him and ſee him, and for ever be where he is.

Verſe 9. "Bleſſed are the peace-makers; for they ſhall be called the children of God." The people of God ſometimes fall out about trifles, but they ſoon fall in again; and ſome never fall out. The children of God are peaceable, and make peace. They have that in them which makes them agree; for they have peace with God, and the peace of God dwells with them, and keeps them. God is called the God of peace. He loves peace, and they love it. They are therefore called his children. They ſtrive to love one another, and to be at peace with others, as God is at peace with them. Peace with God will take them to heaven at laſt. But peace with the brethren is very uſeful in the mean time.

Verſe 10. "Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," that is they who are perſecuted for Chriſt's ſake, who was perſecuted and hung upon the croſs. And when his people are perſecuted, they are not diſtreſſed like other men, for they know that they ſhall be taken up into heaven. So Stephen, when he was ſtoned to death, cried, Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit: And the more they ſtoned him, the more he cried and rejoiced.

I add no more. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you. Amen.

PROV. xiv. 32.

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedneſs; but the righteous hath hope in his death."

THIS text looks like the cloud between the children of Iſrael and Pharoah's hoſt *, which, having a dark ſide to the latter and a bright ſide to the former, repreſents the difference between the godly and ungodly in their death. Iſrael had God with him on the one ſide, which was bright, and Pharaoh had the devil, which is the dark ſpirit, with him. So the righteous have the angel of God always taking care of them, and the unrighteous have the devil always watching over them, having no right views of God. The cloud was dark and bright on oppoſite ſides; and the text, as I was now telling you, may be compared to it, looking to theſe two oppoſite ſtates.

In the firſt place, let us conſider what it is to the wicked, to be driven away in their wickedneſs. Firſt, they are driven away from God in their death, while they are not thinking of it. Secondly, they intereſt themſelves ſo much in the things of this world, in all the riches and pleaſures in it, that when death comes in a moment they are driven away. They would fain live longer. They are not willing to depart, but would live longer in the world, and intereſt themſelves in it. They are always thinking only of it; they are thoughtleſs; they do not think of death; and when it comes, it comes heartily, that they may be driven away. And when they die alſo, they are driven into

* This is Boſton's thought. Other ſuch inſtances may perhaps be found; for he generally pitched upon, and carried away, ſome ſtriking part of every thing he heard or read.

to a world where they are tormented for ever. And they in their wickedneſs all the time, for it is as their garment, and they carry it along with them always. And this is the cauſe that they are driven away, that their wickedneſs was their ſtate. They knew there was a God, but they did not worſhip him, neither obeyed him. They knew God, but in works denied him, and did not believe the Scriptures.

Next, let us go on and deſcribe what condition the righteous are in. They have God for their director. He directs them in ways that they ſhould go. They pray to God; he anſwers their prayers; they receive an anſwer in prayer, and they get comfort in prayer, and comfort in reading the Scriptures, becauſe they find in them the promiſes which God hath promiſed to all who love and obey him. They alſo find comfort by their good thoughts, when God puts it into their hearts that they are among the number whom God chuſeth for his people. This we call comforting them by his Spirit, as formerly by his word. When they are in diſtreſs they hope in God, they hope in him for ſalvation, for God is their hope and portion for ever. He is their foundation, and he ſtrengthens them, and makes them more and more to hope in him. They have hope in their death; becauſe it is in their death, they are brought to him. It is ſaid in the 23d Pſalm, that though they walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, they will fear no evil; for God is with them. It is called but a ſhadow to them, though it is a real death to the wicked; for a ſhadow does not continue. The angel is with them for ever. He is with them through their life, and he continues with them through their death, and the ſhadow of it too; they are taken through it ſafely at the

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end. Although their death ſeparate the ſoul from the body, yet it cannot ſeparate the ſoul from God. And when they are going through the dark and ſolitary vale, they will not be afraid; for they have their faithful friend, Jeſus Chriſt, their beſt friend. He has promiſed, that when they are walking through the water, it ſhall not overwhelm their ſoul, and when they walk through the fire, they ſhall not be burned. Death is like a chariot bringing them unto God. To them it is a ſleep in Jeſus until the reſurrection. It is like a kind meſſenger inviting them to God. It is to them like a call from God, and revives and quickens their ſpirits to ſubmit to it. Like Joſeph's call to Jacob, when he was an old man; he ſent preſents, and letters, and waggons, inviting him: it revived his ſpirit, and gave him courage; and he went to meet him and and kiſſed him. So likewiſe God has to call his people in their death, and it revives their ſpirits, as Joſeph's did to Jacob. And ſo God ſends gifts to his people at their death: his manifeſtations of himſelf to them that he puts in their hearts. But there are ſome of God's people that have not ſo ſure hope in their death, until God grant it them when they are on the point of it. Some have not the ſame degree of hope as others; but one thing we are certain of, they muſt all have hope in their death: and when they come to die, they get a little more hope from God; for it is God who is their hope. And we are ſure that the Chriſtian's hope has a ground; for God is the ground of it.

Let us go next to enquire what they hope for. Perhaps ſome of them deſire to live longer, to inſtruct their friends who know little of God; they would chuſe to enjoy them a little longer, and inſtruct them. Perhaps they would chuſe to know a little more themſelves, even in this world,

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of their own hearts and of God; and when God ſees it neceſſary he will grant it; but perhaps he ſees it not neceſſary, and therefore will take them away to heaven, where they will enjoy him more perfectly than any of the ſaints could do in this world; and perhaps, if they have any religious friends in the family, when they all ſhall go to God, they will enjoy him, and their friends, more in heaven than they could do on earth.

JOHN, Chap. ix.

"As Jeſus paſſed by, he ſaw a man which was blind from his birth," &c.

WHEN Jeſus Chriſt came in the fleſh, he did many miracles. The Jews and Phariſees did not believe on him. Here we ſee him cure one born blind; he never ſaw, but was blind from his birth. The diſciples aſked him, who had ſinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? But it was not for their ſin, but that the works of God might be made manifeſt. I ſay, the Jews and Phariſees did not believe on Chriſt on earth, that he was God; they believed on him as in heaven, but not as on earth. He was in heaven and on earth, both at once. But they blaſphemed him, and did not believe that he was God. And therefore this man's eyes were blind, and Chriſt opened them. "He ſpat on the ground, and made clay of the ſpittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." We were altogether made of clay or duſt. Chriſt made clay with his ſpittle. This was no common ſpittle: it was Chriſt's, and he bleſſed it. He put a bleſſing in it, and it did this man good. He anointed his eyes, and when he

did ſo, he ſaid likewiſe, "Go, waſh in the pool of Siloam." Perhaps the pool may be compared to the blood of Chriſt, that cleanſeth from all ſin. He went and waſhed, and came ſeeing. He believed Chriſt, and he was cured: his faith ſaved him. He ſat begging a bit of bread to his body; he did not expect more. When Chriſt paſſed, he got more; he got bread to his body, and a bleſſing to his ſoul. When he believed and ſaw, his neighbours and parents were ſurpriſed, and did not know him; nor did they know what Chriſt ſays in the 39th verſe, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which ſee not might ſee, and that they which ſee might be made blind." Amen.

THESE papers were early given in manuſcript to a public inſtitution for children, and copies or extracts in different forms are known among a few friends. Their appearing further was not immediately thought of, and the time has ſlipped on. But a candle is not to be put under a buſhel; and this is one which directs its light to all ſuch ſeminaries, and to the children of every family. The publication *now* may be aſcribed to the ſucceſs of the Sunday ſchools, and to a wiſh to promote it. This is mentioned, becauſe, if the ſale ſhould ſo far ſucceed, any profits that may ariſe will go to the benefit of that excellent inſtitution. The ſame account too may poſſibly anſwer another purpoſe. Should any accidental reader feel a diſpoſition to ſay, The date is diſtant, why print now after ſuch a length of time? it may perhaps prevent or repel the frigid objection. Nor is it yet too late. Striking events do not become ſoon remote; and to ſome young people, who, in almoſt mere infancy, ſaw this child, the ſcenes deſcribed in theſe memoirs are as freſh before their eyes as what paſſed yeſterday.

As an *addreſs* to the riſing generation, the preſent little piece would not have been complete, if the diſcourſes had been withheld, which were delivered by this early Chriſtian and juvenile preacher; they were therefore added. The ſtyle is that of a child; the ſentiments are not mean; and they appear abroad in their native ſimplicity, that others of his years may be engaged to receive precept and example, coming both together, and both ſuited to their own minds.

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The ſanction of the late Reverend Gentleman to whom the letter was addreſſed, is the ſanction of too reſpectable, valuable, and eminent a character, to be omitted, when it can be given. Writing of this child, and theſe memoirs, ſoon after he received the narrative, he ſays, "Moſt of the "particulars fell under my own obſervation. I was preſent "when he delivered his ſentiments on Matt. 5th chap. from "the 1ſt to the 10th verſe. He ſaid much upon that paſ- "ſage which is not written; but ſo far as I am able to re- "collect, nothing is written which I did not hear him de- "liver with a warmth and propriety that plainly ſhowed "he was taught of God. He was in all reſpects an uncom- "mon child, and may juſtly be conſidered as a ſtriking evi- "dence of the power of Divine grace in this degenerate "age."

Edinburgh,
October 1796.